

# Chapter 5

## Stakeholder & Open House Issue Identification

## 5. Stakeholder and Open House Issues Identification

As noted earlier in the Summary Report, a series of methods were used to identify community issues relating to the future of the Stevens Creek Basin. These included: community open houses; interviews with stakeholders (i.e. individuals, organizations, public agencies and department representatives and other groups), and comments submitted to the Stevens Creek Basin Planning Initiative's Web Site maintained by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department.

This section of the Report summarizes the issues identified through the community involvement process. Please note that this list of issues does not represent a scientific survey of responses, nor are the issues in any prioritized manner. Also, many of the issues are not mutually exclusive and represent a wide range of thinking. Issues identified reflect ideas and perceptions of individuals, organizations, public agencies and departments and groups and is recorded in this report.

The list of issues compiled during this process were used as a base of information to introduce wider points of view and consideration topics during the Task Force's discussions and workshops. During September, a summary of issues were presented to the Task Force. The issue list assisted in the development of Goals, Principles, and Concepts that later evolved into planning guidelines for the Stevens Creek Basin.

In addition, a number of presentations were made to the Task Force to supplement specific areas of interest to the Task Force, and provide technical information concerning future planning project which may influence development in the Stevens Creek Basin.

### **A. Stakeholders Contacted**

The following individuals, organizations, public agencies and departments representatives and other groups with interests in the Stevens Creek Basin were contacted and interviewed or submitted comments concerning the Basin. Interviews were conducted by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Department during the months of April, May, and June of 2000:

- Bluestem Sierra Club
- Cass County Rural Water District No.2
- Cheney Public School District
- Cheney Sanitary Improvement District No.5
- City of Waverly
- Downtown Lincoln Association
- East Stevens Creek Landowners and Residents
- Friends of Wilderness Park
- Home Builders Association of Lincoln
- Lancaster County Board of Commissioners
- Lancaster County Cooperative Extension (UN-L)
- Lancaster County Ecological Advisory Committee
- Lancaster County Engineer
- Lancaster County Farm Bureau
- Lancaster County Rural Water District No. 1
- Lincoln-Lancaster County Health Department
- Lincoln-Lancaster County Planning Commission
- Lincoln-Lancaster Emergency Services
- Lincoln Board of Realtors
- Lincoln Chamber of Commerce
- Lincoln City Council
- Lincoln Electric System
- Lincoln Fire Department
- Lincoln Independent Business Association Government Affairs Committee
- Lincoln Parks and Recreation Department
- Lincoln Partnership for Economic Development
- Lincoln Public School District
- Lincoln Public Works Department
- Lower Platte South Natural Resources District
- Mayor of Lincoln
- Mayor's Environmental Advisory Committee
- Mayor's Neighborhood Roundtable
- Nature Conservancy
- Norris Public Power District
- Pine Lake Sanitary Improvement District No.2
- Preservation Association of Lincoln
- Southeast Rural Fire Department
- Stevens Creek Preservation Association

- Wachiska Audubon Society
- Walton Sanitary Improvement District No. 8
- Waverly Fire Department
- Waverly Public School District
- Village of Bennet

## **B. Summary of Issues**

- **Design/Density/Direction of Development Theme**
  - Quality of development within the basin.
  - Density is an important consideration for the Lincoln Public Schools to provide efficient educational services to the City -- effects school bus service.
  - Energy efficiency of structures needs to be a consideration for the design of residential areas.
  - The issues associated with acreage development should be examined.
  - Stevens Creek Basin is located on the east side of Lincoln and is an integral part of the relationship between Lincoln and Omaha.
  - Lower density acreage development usually tends to have a level of service needs that tend to exceed the tax revenues that are generated from the development -- difficult to provide services to these areas.
  - Twenty acre or larger development protect the rural environment.
  - Difficult to initially subdivide acreage development.
- **Timing/Phasing/Transition of Development Theme**
  - Difficult to develop a plan without the beltway decision.
  - Schools and hospitals need to be identified for this area early in the development process.
  - City expansion to the east would reduce area served by the Waverly School District and the Cheney School District, and, depending on the direction of the growth, may significantly impact Cheney's School District future viability.
  - Future Waverly and Cheney school district plan's to construct new facilities -- Difficult to make those decisions.
  - If Cheney and Lincoln Public School systems were to merge, the transition of the Cheney school facility into the Lincoln school system with LPS standards would be an issue.

- School districts (e.g. Waverly and Cheney School Districts) would lose valuation through City annexation.
  - Depending on the need, there is an issue with finding adequate sites for future LPS school development within the basin.
  - Difficulties with annexing acreages and annexing lands on the other side of acreages – the economies of scale to serve acreage development with city services.
  - The phasing of development should be examined.
  - Timing and phasing of development is important for transferring areas served by rural water districts to the City's water service -  
- important for future investments of rural water districts.
  - Timing and phasing of development towards the southeast of Lincoln is important for the Cheney Sanitary Improvement District to make a decision as to whether to expand there sewer lagoon treatment system -- decision whether to do further bonding.
  - The City needs to aggressively annex new areas.
  - The need for a adequate buffer between the City of Lincoln and the Lincoln Electric System service area boundaries with Norris Public Power District, so future growth can be accommodated -- especially on the southern end of the basin.
- **Interface/Relationship with the City and the County (Urban/Rural Form)**
    - Development in the Stevens Creek Basin would de-emphasize Downtown Lincoln as the center of the community.
    - Far eastern development within the Stevens Creek Basin would be the most detrimental to Downtown Lincoln.
    - How would significant future development at the fringe impact historic resources in the downtown and older neighborhoods?
    - Gateway Mall may become the geographic center of the city if the City of Lincoln moves further to the east -- there is a need to examine the implications of this.
- **Roads/Traffic/Transportation Theme**
    - The road network needs to be identified for the next 50 years.
    - The need to preserve the road grid in one-mile corridors.
    - Urbanization within the basin will require the need for a major transportation connector to serve the area and the additional growth.

- If the City's east-west width from downtown to the future eastern city limits approaches 7 to 10 miles, there will be a need for a major east-west connector(s) to serve the area.
- The need to make a decision on the beltway. This decision may influence road needs and development.
- The transition of County roads built to County standards to City streets built to City standards.
- The cost of maintaining county roads in acreage developments. Tax revenues from acreage development may be less than the costs.
- Possible increase in traffic in existing City neighborhoods due to possible increase in development.
- An increase in development on the east side of the City of Lincoln may cause an increase in traffic in the City of Waverly.
- Need to examine cross-town traffic issues related to the entire City.
- Transportation linkages between downtown Lincoln and future development in the Stevens Creek Basin are important to downtown and need to be identified.
- Transportation linkages between downtown Lincoln and the Stevens Creek area may lead to widened streets in older neighborhoods.

- **Infrastructure Development Theme**

- Knowing that the city will be growing in one direction at one time so the focus and financing of construction of a wastewater treatment and distribution system can be on that direction of growth.
- City expansion to the east would require the need to construct new City water infrastructure in areas served with rural water district infrastructure.
- Rural water districts will continue to upgrade facilities up until urbanization, including areas that are planned for annexation -- improvements won't be to City standards.
- City expansion to the east would require the need to increase capacities at water storage facilities.
- The difficulty of going into a new basin without phasing of development is knowing what size of trunk sewer to construct and plan for long term development.

- Improving the sewer trunk line on North 84<sup>th</sup> Street may be pending, depending on whether there is a need to construct a trunk sewer for the Stevens Creek Basin.
  - There is difficulty with sewerage acreages – problem with recovering costs from low density development.
  - There is difficulty with providing rural water service to acreage development due to off-peak hour usage characteristics.
  - Mediation between Lincoln Electric System and the Norris Public Power District on fees to buyout customers -- makes it difficult to move the LES service area further eastward.
  - Increases in acreage development in the Stevens Creek basin would potentially increase the cost for the Lincoln Electric System to expand further east into the Stevens Creek Basin.
- **Financing of Infrastructure and Community Services Theme**
    - If the City expands into the Stevens Creek Basin, the Lincoln Public Schools would have to finance new schools through a bond issue.
    - Repayment of school bond indebtedness from the former school district facilities after annexed into the City of Lincoln and then served by Lincoln Public Schools.
    - Financing of infrastructure should be examined for the area, including water, sanitary sewer, stormwater, and utilities.
    - The financing of roads for the area -- Lincoln has not gotten its fair share of road monies.
    - Possibility of competing projects for public funds within the City.
    - What would be the impact of development in the Stevens Creek Basin on sewer rates?
    - Because of limited funds available, the ability to construct a major trunk sewer line in more than one direction at one time is limited. There isn't enough funds to finance both a "N1 and N2" sewer line and a Stevens Creek sewer line.
    - Who will pay for public infrastructure improvements to accommodate urbanization in the basin.

- **Jurisdictional Theme**

- Transition of electric service from Norris Public Power District to Lincoln Electric System if portions of the basin were annexed. Serving customers during transition of line and facility upgrades.
- Significant City annexation to the east would reduce the size of the Southeast Rural Fire District, possibly dropping from 44 square miles to 18 square miles.
- The reduction in the size of the Southeast Rural Fire District may lead to the need for merging of rural fire districts -- this would require approval from the State -- the state hasn't changed boundaries since 1954.
- Significant loss of Southeast Fire District Area may compromise their ability to remain in existence -- portion of their district directly south of Lincoln would be unassigned unless merger occurs.
- Annexation eastward would require the Lincoln Fire Department one year to transition the amount of equipment needed to serve the area.
- Loss of fire district area would have a significant impact on revenues for the Southeast Fire District and possibly other districts -- impacts equipment maintenance.
- Rural water districts (Lancaster County RWD #1 and Cass County RWD #2) would have to continue serving customers up until urbanization occurs and maintain those commitments.
- According to the rural water districts a formula is used for the developer to pay for the loss of customers due to annexation.

- **Market Considerations/Economic Development Theme**

- Industrial sites need to be earmarked for future potential uses in the area.
- There is a need to look at housing affordability issues.
- There is a shortage of land for commercial development.
- The City of Lincoln is going to continue to grow in size.
- Larger residential lots are in demand within the city.
- People like choice for diverse residential opportunities.
- Need to balance moderately priced housing with upper end housing in the basin.
- The linkages between Lincoln and Omaha are important and should not be underestimated.



- How much tax revenues won't be generated if development doesn't occur in the Stevens Creek Basin?
- **Natural Resources and Open Space Theme**
  - The natural environment in the creek corridor provides:
    - < A diverse mix of plant species;
    - < The Creek corridor supports beaver, deer, red fox, raccoon, opossum and other animal species.
    - < Filtration of water that occurs along the Creek corridor and slows and traps eroded soil;
    - < Filters and retains excessive nutrients.
  - Overall, Stevens Creek appears to be a stable, reasonably predictable channel and environment -- especially in the upper end of the Creek.
  - Stevens Creek appears to be more distressed north of Havelock Avenue.
  - The need to buffer areas alongside the creek.
  - The need to restrict development in the 100 and 500 year flood plain to prevent future flood damage.
  - Urbanization will have an effect on stormwater runoff and flooding.
  - The effects urban storm water runoff exists in Stevens Creek north of Havelock Avenue -- Creek banks are beginning to erode in these areas.
  - A stormwater master plan for the basin should be developed prior to urbanization -- the identification of land uses are integral to the development of a master plan.
  - Ability to preserve natural environment into the stormwater philosophy of the basin.
  - What does the community want the stormwater channel to look like in the Stevens Creek Basin?:
    - < How does the community want stream corridors to look and function?
    - < Relationship of urban density to a stormwater system.
    - < The provision of open space within development and their use in stormwater management.
    - < Ability of acquiring land rights to address stormwater runoff.
    - < The design of impervious surfaces.

- What goal does the community set for stormwater runoff in the basin?
  - There should be sensitivity given to historic, cultural, and environmental resources.
  - Open lands have a tendency to increase property values.
  - Issues associated with natural resources should be examined.
  - Existing resources should be mapped, this includes prairies, wetlands, historical places, and dams.
  - The flood structures need to be placed first before development occurs.
  - Maintaining the riparian and habitat areas along Stevens Creek.
  - Erosion control is important for managing floods, protecting farmland, groundwater, and native prairies.
  - Some wetlands exist in the Stevens Creek Basin that help maintain water quality and provide flora and fauna habitat -- none of them are saline wetlands.
- **Parks and Recreation Theme**
    - A major community/regional park would be needed to serve the area.
    - Additional revenue would be needed for acquisition and maintenance of new park facilities.
    - There is difficulty with providing a continuous area of undisturbed passive parkland in the Stevens Creek Basin due to the grid road system.
    - For every square mile of urbanization there is a need for a neighborhood park.
    - Additional trails would be needed to serve the new growth and maintain the integrity of the existing trails in the basin.
    - Trails and parkland may compromise individual landowners privacy.
- **Landowner/Residents Theme**
    - The beltway decision needs to be made so individual landowner plans can be made.
    - There is a lot of stress among the landowners due to not having a beltway decision and potential development in the basin that is not currently planned.

- Some landowners in the Stevens Creek Basin have expressed the need to do more acreages in the Stevens Creek basin.
- **Agricultural Theme**
  - The farmers and landowners in the far eastern portion of the basin have been in the farming business for many generations and have enjoyed the agricultural lifestyle for many years.
  - Farming and development need to remain separate because of hazards and conflicts.
  - Need to examine agricultural zoning.
  - Some of Lancaster County's better farmland exists in east central section (including Stevens Creek Basin) of Lancaster County.
  - Challenges of farming – challenges with making a substantial income from farming.
- **Process Theme**
  - Input gained in this process should be reflected in the proposal for the Stevens Creek Basin.
  - There is a need to have a real plan for the area.
  - Recommendations for the future of the Stevens Creek Basin should be done for the right reasons.
  - The Comprehensive Plan needs to be done in a timely manner.
  - A plan that has participation by citizens and community groups up front in hard to control and is not efficient.

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